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ABSTRACT

The award rate of doctorates has tripled since 1960 and the projections indicate that by 1980 the rate will be somewhere between 60 and 70,000. In recent years every facet of the PhD has come under attack. The degree will probably be reshaped from a standard of achievement and accomplishment to a standard of potential, frcm a demonstration of the ability to use certain research skills to mere knowledge of what the skills are. There are three groups that will affect the reshaping of the PhD: (1) Those who plan to obtain the degree because it is the promise to a better life. As more people become aware of this factor, the pressure will increase to do away with the achievement standard. (2) The second group, the current PhD holders, the college faculty, will want to keep the degree exclusive, especially at a time when the job market is tight. (3) The third group that will affect the PhD is the one that pays for it: the federal and state governments, neither of which seems interested in expansion of PhD programs, and the undergraduate students whose tuition often pays for graduate programs. There probably will be pressure to generalize the PhD degree and the PhD will no longer be the mark of highest achievement as a research degree. (AF)

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NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE PH.D.?*

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DR. DAVID R. DEENER: Coming from New Orleans, I can very well appreciate the gourmet's dilemma that Dean Spurr was placed in when Mike finished speaking. That is whether to have coffee before Deener or Deener before coffee. (Laughter)

While in theory his solution may have been incorrect from a pragmatic--and all deans are pragmatic--point of view, it was the correct solution.

The title and general substance of my remarks are printed in the program, the direction, that is. The particular title that I have chosen is, "Whither--" spelled with an "H" "the Ph.D.?" (Laughter)

Whether viewed as an imported commodity or

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as a domestic product, the Ph.D. Degree in the United States boasts a most respectable vintage. In fact, either the imported or domestic variety qualifies under Bureau of Customs standards as an antique, since it is now 153 years since Edward Everett received his Ph.D. from Gottingen, and 109 years since Yale awarded the first domestic Ph.D. in the United States.

That the Ph.D. found a hospitable climate in America is certainly understating the case. Yet in retrospect, the growth in doctoral education in the U.S. during the immediate four decades after Yale's first award could scarcely be called phenomenal. Even so--and this is a bit comforting--alarms were sounded and anecdotes prescribed 'way back in what to most of us seems almost a pre-history in the development of the Ph.D.

In 1903 no less a person than Williams James complained in a publication of the Ph.D. Octopus.

Following the turn of the century, the growth rate in the doctoral area did, indeed, become phenomenal. Graduate enrollments doubled with each decade from 1900 to 1940 and the growth rate became more phenomenal after World War II. The doctorate award rate, not only graduate enrollment, will have tripled during the

1960's from about nine to ten thousand in 1960 to almost thirty thousand in the current year, and projections indicate by 1980 the annual award rate will be somewhere between sixty- and seventy thousand.

In the present period of expansion, the alarms of yesteryear sound like fond lovers' complaints compared to the bombastic criticisms currently leveled at the Ph.D. Probably every facet of the Ph.D., the dissertation requirement, the language requirement, the residence requirement, the entrance requirement and so on ad infinitum has come under attack. In short, the 1960's has unleashed a complex of forces that could thoroughly reshape the Ph.D.

What I propose to do here is to indicate briefly the direction of this potential reshaping as I see it, and then to place some emphasis on a few of the human forces, as distinct from the academic forces, that are pushing and resisting reshaping of the Ph.D.

Let me first set forth the direction of reshaping as I see it. In theological terms I think the direction of reshaping is away from work in the direction of faith, and in practical terms, away from the standard of achievement and accomplishment to the standard of

potential, rather than the actual.

I think it is affecting all the major components of the Ph.D. program as it has been known in its classical form.

The Ph.D. has been, I guess, most commonly defined as a research degree, the hallmark of which is a contribution to knowledge, that is, the dissertation, and this distinguishes it from all other degrees, advanced degrees.

But what is happening in the area of the dissertation? From a demonstrated original contribution which was the classical definition, there has been a tendency in many fields simply to make it a demonstration of ability to use research tools without the necessity of showing any research accomplishment. And in some areas it is not even a demonstration of ability to use research tools, but really mere awareness of what the research skills are necessary to perform research, if you wanted to do it. This has perhaps happened most clearly in the master's area where the master with a thesis is rapidly being replaced by the master's degree without a thesis as simply a course in methodology along the line.

The language requirement and the change in

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those also, I think, are part of this movement away from demonstrated achievement to ability to use skills, to mere knowledge of what the skills are. In some institutions the two-language requirement has been substituted for by mathematics, and in other areas simply a couple of courses in a cognate field which hardly would qualify as skill, I believe.

In other areas the dissertation topic is phrased in a very hypothetical way, almost a hypothetical hypothesis rather than empirical demonstration.

In the area of course work, the stress of the last couple of years, the pressure has been to move from graded course work to pass-fail. Again, the students are reacting against any kind of a demonstration of achievement when you go from graded work to pass-fail and I have no doubt that in many institutions mere registration for course work will be sufficient without even pass-fail.

And in the entrance requirement area the "B" average level which was printed and probably still is printed in most catalogues has just about gone by the board. The graduate record exams are used when you need to exclude somebody; they are thrown out when you need to take somebody in. And in many institutions open

admissions has become the policy for entrance to graduate school. All of which, as I see it, is away from the criterion of achievement to something else, call it potential, or simply call it equality.

I might borrow on my Louisiana background a bit and requote Descartes--that's the French heritage. (Laughter)

What he should have said, had he lived in Louisiana and commenting on the Ph.D. scene right now: "I am; therefore, I think; therefore I am a Ph.D." (Laughter)

Or to use a Redneck, or the Long French heritage, I would paraphrase Huey Long, "Every man a Ph.D." (Laughter)

Now what are these human forces as distinct from the academic forces that appear to be shaping or attempting to reshape and resist the reshaping of the Ph.D.?

I would like to talk about these forces in terms of the psychological rewards or motivations of human beings, particularly status and prestige, and the material rewards or motivations; that is, the desire to get more of the economic goodies of this particular political system.

The fact is that there are three groups, I think, human groups that are going to be very important in this. First of all, there are those who already have the Ph.D. They man the university and college faculties, they man many of the positions in state boards, many of the positions in government agencies dealing with higher education.

They compose the "Ph.D-dom." They have acquired high status, they have acquired a considerable portion of the economic goods of this society, and they "ain't about to give it up without a fight."

The second group that is concerned with this are those who want to get the Ph.D. or the doctorate. They want high status and they want more of the economic goodies of this life.

And then there is the third group that is the one that has caused the trouble in recent years; they who have to provide the money so that those who have the Ph.D. will teach those who want to get the Ph.D. (Laughter) And it is in these three groups I would like to make a few remarks.

First of all, as to those who want to get the Ph.D. or the doctorate or an advanced degree. We have

already seen great pressure over the last 25 years for this group to expand in numbers and there is, in my estimation, no sign that there is going to be a decrease in demand for degrees in higher education for the simple reason that the degree has become a means of access to economic position. And it is going to increasingly become a means of excess not looked upon in terms of the original motion of the Ph.D., which is a contribution to knowledge. It is looked upon as a way to get along better in this life.

All you have to do is look at what happened in state after state where, for example, in teachers' education you now have the master's equivalency in which the person takes a certain number of hours, no degree is required, and the automatic salary bump goes up.

Also in this society, for better or for worse, there are minority and disadvantaged groups who have caught on to the fact that a college degree, and more particularly an advanced degree, is one method of upward mobility and they are not going to cease their demands to be admitted to higher education. I speak of blacks across the country, Puerto Ricans in New York, perhaps even Indians in Arizona will be doing this pretty

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soon. This is a way to get professional status and prestige.

It will not cease. These people will want higher education degrees.

Now if the criterion of achievement is going to slow down that access rate, it is going to filter out large numbers. The pressure will be to do away with them. and I think this is what is happening, that the earlier standards which were fitted for a small group, a small group of the citizenry, just will not do, and I think this is the reason these standards are going by the board.

There may be some justification for it, I am not arguing that there isn't. But I do believe that more and more higher education is going to be measured in the fact that you get a piece of paper after you put in so much time, because the goal is not knowledge, the goal is an economic and personal reward. And the figures, every figure we see indicates there is not going to be this decrease, any decrease in pressure in the 1970's; it is going to increase. And my prediction is that this is what the second group, those who have the Ph.D., have to face; that is, the college faculties, those who have them.

Now let me preface my remarks in this way

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about those who hold the Ph.D. I know of no instance in recorded history where those who have had a going monopoly voluntarily dissolved the monopoly in favor of free competition. (Laughter) I think this is the situation with respect to the university faculties.

Now right now, as many of you well know, on certain college campuses fear, if not hysteria, is almost rampant in the face of 10 per cent salary cut, no additional positions, et cetera, et cetera. This could force university faculties to tighten the monopoly situation. It could become very critical. And in the broad circle of professional organizations among professors like the AAUP, there are already signs that economic security of the group has become foremost in programs of that organization.

If that is the case, there is going to be a pretty big clash between those who want to enter higher education and those who are already in there and the Ph.D., I think, is going to be the critical point.

To take an example. From a graduate dean's point of view the glut on the market for Ph.D's. would give us the greatest opportunity in the world to trade in our departments. Just think about that. (Laughter)

Here you have a department of ten people, four producers, four non-producers and two in the middle and here we have these thousands of fresh, bright, genius Ph.D's. clamoring for jobs. The smart guy would trade them in. (Laughter) If they didn't have tenure, ease them out, take on the bright ones and we have an uplifting of departmental programs across the country. That isn't going to happen for the simple reason that the existing group of faculty probably won't let it. They will feel that once you permit this, then when they become outmoded they, too, will be put in the boneyard. It is a very human feeling; I don't blame them.

Now the question is, what will the faculty do in the face of this increasing pressure of people to be admitted to their status, and remember, most Ph.D's. did not jump up and down with joy when the lawyers created the Doctor of Juris Degree. And many a campus has had an incipient battle going on when the medical students complained as they have, that the Ph.D. was called the highest degree and they resented it, and in some schools it has led--this is a fact--to separate graduations for the medical students apart from the Ph.D's.

I don't think that the faculties have a

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freedom of choice in this that they would like to have for the simple reason that the third group, those who are paying for higher education, have had something to say in the last few years.

Let's take a look at those who are paying for it and really I mean here those who make the decision to release funds. N.S.F. doesn't really pay for science education in the sense that they get the money, create it, but they do control, and Congress does control the release strings.

The federal government has given signs already that insofar as Ph.D. education is concerned, they felt they have had quite enough of expansion. And one easy solution for the faculty would be to continue the rate of expansion and all of these problems would go away. You would absorb all the new Ph.D's., your departments would get bigger, you would teach the disadvantaged, and all of the problems would go away.

But at least policy for the last couple of years has precluded that solution, and I think probably will be precluded for the first five years of the 1970's. So I don't look for the federal solution, continued inflation so to speak, as a viable choice for the faculties.

Much the same thing is occurring at the state level. Where the state is supporting a system of higher education the costs at the doctorate level are high--they may not be as high as some state boards say they are, but still in the face of all of the other demands for funds in urban areas for other purposes, the question has arisen whether expansion of graduate education at the state level also is feasible. I think it varies from state to state, but by and large I don't think that the expansion that occurred between '55 and '65 is going to continue, although in isolated states it might be a little bit different.

What I am trying to say is that inflation is not the solution, it just isn't at hand now; that is, continually building up your departments in the face of even increasing enrollments.

What about the private institutions, because the state's situation affects mainly and principally the state schools; the federal situation affects both. Private donors who have been the largest single support of your major private institutions, there has been an increasing indication that funds are not forthcoming there for continual expansion of all of your private institutions.

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And the down of the stock market has even cut into the endowment capital of most private institutions, some very substantially. The recession that has occurred has affected private giving all over the country.

Many people think it is a cause, it may be the occasion, I don't know, but it has happened. I don't believe private institutions can look forward to inflation as a solution if they have to continue to rely upon annual giving or increments to endowment.

Now in many a private graduate institution the person who pays most of the cost of graduate education is your undergraduate student. He pays a high tuition to be lectured at by teaching assistants for two years and occasionally see a professor in his last two years, and much of his tuition really goes to the support of graduate instruction and graduate research.

Most private institutions have been continually raising tuitions. We may have come to the end of the line on that and, again, the inflationary solution is not going to be available in my estimation, at least not at the rate necessary to continue the easy method of 1955 to 1960.

Now if inflation is out but there is a

demand for more graduate degrees, what, then, are the alternatives? Well, let me sum up a little bit with two alternatives as I see them.

It seems to me that the major Ph.D.-granting institutions or doctorate-granting institutions are pretty much like a number of corks bobbing around on the turbulent seas or tides of higher education today. They can't do much about it except decide to either float or go with the tide. They can't stop the tide toward an increase in the number of people who will seek higher education; they can't stop that, it's on the way, it's coming, it's here. What they can do, I suppose, is jettison themselves or, perhaps, take some steps to save themselves as individual institutions. This means, I think, that any general--how will I put this--any cautious policy as to what to do about the Ph.D. is not likely to be arrived at. You may arrive at one by looking back and saying a number of individual steps were taken and this is what happened, but maybe I can illustrate this.

For example, one way of having the Ph.D. meet this situation would be to make it a very inclusive degree, to make it very flexible so that it could comprehend, for example, the Doctor of Engineering Degree in

which the application of skill rather than the creation of new knowledge would be the equivalent of the research requirement.

It could perhaps take over the methodological type degree which is epitomized by the Doctor of Arts or the Doctor of Education, and you just simply have the Ph.D., no other degree, but various kinds of Ph.D's. all across the country.

I don't think this is likely to happen for the simple reason that in certain institutions, particularly those in the A.A.U., for example, in private ones, I think the faculty resistance to making the Ph.D. all-inclusive would be too great.

I think that the Ph.D. is a status symbol to them, as it is to me, and they ain't going to give it up easily. They would rather fight than switch; that is, make it flexible. They may go a little bit along the lines of Don Cooke, let them put 14 research papers between black covers, but they still will ask for the 14 research papers, and that's the big difference.

Several institutions, and probably the most prestigous I think, will resist down to the hard core making the Ph.D. all-inclusive. This doesn't mean that

other institutions will not. So I don't think a generalization of the Ph.D. is going to result.

What about the opposite tack, that you harden the requirements for the Ph.D., crystallize them? Well, this means in essence that in higher education other doctorate programs are simply going to emerge. To restrict the Ph.D. in numbers is to create the Doctor of Arts, let's face it, that's the choice you have. To face it on the research requirement as demonstrated achievement, contribution to knowledge, is to create Doctors of Engineering, Doctors of Social Work, Doctors of This and Doctors of That. If you are going to push one way, it is going to pop up the other way.

So my feeling is that a certain select number of schools--and I use "select" in the sense of self-selected, will probably try to maintain an almost semi-classical view of the Ph.D. They will probably be the best endowed institutions, maybe a few of the larger state universities, and you will have what you have in effect now, a Ph.D. which is a Ph.D. unlike any other, it is more marketable, but will not have the overall predominance in the area as before.

Developing institutions and, incidentally,

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most of the increased plan in doctorate production from the 1970's to the 1980's is not in the established institutions but in the developing institutions will have a choice. If they have enough Ph.D's. on their faculty, they will go ahead and create new Ph.D. programs despite what anybody else says, they will just do it. If they don't have enough Ph.D's. on their faculties, or if they have strong-minded graduate deans, they may settle for creating a series of other degrees, Doctor of Arts, Doctor of Mathematics, Master of Philosophy, whatever you want to call it. But there will be created, these developing institutions will not stop. They are mostly public institutions, they are outside, they are in some of the larger cities of states that never had institutions or growing urban areas, and just like post offices, they are going to be, and they are going to mail letters in terms of advanced degrees.

The finest plan, I think, is for the small liberal arts college or the small liberal arts university for the next five years. They may, as my friend Dick Adams mentioned yesterday, they may have to make some very serious cuts.

Now, what is all this going to add up to?

Regardless of whether there is an attempt to generalize the Ph.D. or to make it all-inclusive, or whether the other path is taken, self-selected institutions will harden the requirements and other degrees bob up, I think most Ph.D. degrees or most doctorate degrees will no longer be terminal degrees. I think they will become entrances into various professions, the research profession, the teaching profession, whatever you want to call it, and that you can look down the road, that in disciplinary areas, the mark of academic status and prestige which the Ph.D. once constituted will now have to be awarded by various honorific devices within the various disciplines and the various professions.

I am not saying that the doctorandus will come back or will be transplanted to the U.S., but I do think that the Ph.D. is about going out as a mark of highest achievement as a research degree.